



Collective Statistics Concerning Drug Use

Prepared by

Drug Enforcement Administration

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CASA National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse VI: Teens, February 2001

Provided by the *Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse* at Columbia University. The survey focuses on revealing the factors which contribute to teen substance abuse risk. The survey was conducted by telephone between October 20, 2000 and November 5, 2000 with a randomly selected sample of 1000 teenagers between ages 12 & 17 living in the United States. The survey scores placed the respondents into one of three categories of risk: low risk (39%), moderate risk (42%), and high risk (19%).

- For the sixth year in a row, drugs are the most important problem teens say they face.
- The percentage of teens who said they expected to never try an illegal drug in the future has dropped significantly from 60 % in 1999 to 51% in 2000.
- In 1999, 33 % had friends currently using marijuana; in 2000, 34 % did.
- In 1999, 48% of teens knew a user of hard drugs; in 2000, 44 percent did.
- 14.6 million 12 to 17 year-olds (61%) are at moderate or high risk of substance abuse, based on the U.S. Census population figure for 12 to 17 year-olds of 24 million in the December 2000 Current Population Survey.
- In 1999, 47 % of teens said cigarettes were easier to buy than marijuana or beer; in 2000, only 33% said cigarettes were easiest. In 1999, 27% said marijuana was easiest compared with 33% in 2000.
- For the first time CASA asked teens about Ecstasy: 28% of teenagers know a friend or classmate who has used Ecstasy and 17 percent know more than just one user. 10% of the sample had been to a rave. Ecstasy was available at 70% of these raves.
- The risk of substance abuse for a student who attends a school in which illegal drugs are kept, used and sold is more than twice the risk of a student in a drug-free school.
- 50% of teens attends schools which are not drug free.
- When parents supervise their teenagers and impose rules or standards of behavior, their teens are at substantially lower risk of substance abuse than teens from "hands off" households.

27% report "hands on" parents, and have half the average risk of all teens.

18% report "hands off" parents, and are four times the risk of the teens with "hands on" parents.

- **Of High Risk Teens** (19% of 12 to 17 year-olds):
 - 63% smoke, 44% daily.
 - 38% currently drink alcohol in a typical week.
 - 54% get drunk at least once per month.
 - 86% have friends who use marijuana.
 - 71% know of a friend or classmate using acid, cocaine, or heroin.
 - 62% could buy marijuana in less than one hour.
 - 85% have tried marijuana.
 - 53% say future drug use is “likely.”
- **Of Moderate Risk Teens** (42% of 12 to 17 year-olds):
 - 5% have smoked a cigarette in the last 30 days.
 - 17% drink alcohol.
 - 27% get drunk.
 - 43% have a friend using marijuana.
 - 61% know a friend or classmate using acid, cocaine, or heroin.
 - 42% could buy marijuana in a few hours or less.
 - 12% have tried marijuana.
 - 54% admit any possibility of future illegal drug use.
- **Of Low Risk Teens** (39% percent of 12 to 17 year-olds):
 - 1% have smoked a cigarette in the last 30 days.
 - 3% drink alcohol.
 - 0% get drunk.
 - 3% have friends who smoke marijuana.
 - 15% know a user of acid, cocaine or heroin.
 - 47% would be able to buy marijuana.
 - 0% have tried marijuana.
 - 77% say they will never try illegal drugs.

Monitoring the Future Study, University of Michigan, December 2000

The 2000 study surveyed over 45,000 students in 435 schools across the nation about lifetime use, past year use, past month use, daily use of drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes and smokeless tobacco.

- Overall use of illicit drugs among teenagers remained unchanged from last year.
- Drug use among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders found that illicit drug use, including marijuana, generally remained unchanged in the year. This is the fourth year in a row that the use of any illicit drugs among teenagers has stayed level or declined in all categories: lifetime, past year, and past month use.
- Among the few statistically significant changes reported were increases in the use of MDMA (ecstasy) in each grade; decreases in the use of cocaine among seniors; and increases in the use of steroids among 10th graders.
- For the second year in a row, there was an increase in the use of MDMA (ecstasy) among 10th & 12th graders, but for the first time, there was an increase in use among 8th graders, increasing from 1.7 percent to 3.1 percent. Usage among 12th graders increased from 5.6 percent to 8.2 percent. Past year use increased among 10th graders, although not statistically significant, from 4.4 percent in 1999 to 5.4 percent in 2000.
- Marijuana use in the lifetime, past year, and past month categories remained statistically unchanged from 1999 to 2000. Past year use of marijuana was 15.6 percent for 8th graders, 32.2 percent for 10th graders, and 36.5 percent for 12th graders.

- Use of several specific illicit drugs, including PCP, narcotics other than heroin, methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine, barbiturates, tranquilizers, and Rohypnol, also remained stable for all teenagers in all categories from 1999 to 2000: lifetime, past year, past month, and daily (where applicable) use.
- Over the past three or four years, several illicit drugs including inhalants, LSD, and Rohypnol have shown declining trends in all three grades.
- Among 8th graders, disapproval of trying marijuana once or twice increased for the second year in a row to 72.5 percent. Disapproval rates among 12th graders also increased, with 52.5 percent of seniors disapproving of trying marijuana once or twice.
- Among seniors, perceived harmfulness of steroid use decreased from 62.1 percent in 1999 to 57.9 percent in 2000, the second year of substantial decline.
- Among 10th graders, the perceived harmfulness of using cocaine and crack decreased. Perceptions of “great risk” in “taking crack occasionally” decreased from 79.1 percent in 1999 to 76.9 percent in 2000, and perceived risk of “trying cocaine powder once or twice” decreased from 51.6 percent to 48.8 percent.
- Among 10th graders, the perceived availability of crack and cocaine powder decreased from 36.5 percent in 1999 to 34.0 percent in 2000, and 36.7 percent in 1999 to 34.5 percent in 2000, respectively.
- Disapproval of regular LSD use decreased among 8th graders from 72.5 percent in 1999 to 69.3 percent in 2000.

Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, November 27, 2000

The survey, by the *Partnership for a Drug Free America*, monitors drug-related behavior and attitudes among children, teens and parents. It is the largest on-going research on drug-related attitudes in the US, and the only on-going drug survey that collects data on children as young as eight and nine. For this 13th installment, 7,290 teens completed self-administered, anonymous questionnaires.

- According to the study, 23.6 million teens are in grades seven through 12 in America today.
 - 11.3 million of them (48 percent of the teen population) have tried illegal drugs, down from 53% in 1997;
 - 9.2 million of them (39 percent) have used illegal drugs in the past year, down from 43%;
 - 5.9 million of them (25 percent) have used illegal drugs in the past 30 days, down from 28%.
- Marijuana is by far the most widely used illegal drugs among teens:
 - 9.4 million teens (40 percent of the teen population) have tried marijuana, down from 44% in 1997;
 - 7.8 million teens (33 percent) have used marijuana in the past year, down from 36%;
 - 5 million teens (21 percent) have used marijuana in the past 30 days, down from 24%.
- Various other illegal drugs have been tried by fewer teens:
 - 5 million teens (21 percent of the teen population) have tried inhalants, down from 19% last year;
 - 2.8 million (12 percent) have tried LSD, up from 10 percent;
 - 2.6 million (11 percent) have tried methamphetamine, down from 10% last year, and up significantly since 1993 (8 percent);
 - 2.4 million (10 percent) have tried cocaine/crack, up from 9% last year, and up significantly since 1993;
 - 2.4 million (10 percent) have tried Ecstasy, up from seven percent, and doubled since 1995;
 - 0.9 million (4 percent) have tried heroin.
- Eight percent of the teen population (1.9 million) have tried illegal drugs, and NOT tried marijuana.

The PRIDE Survey, 1999-00, September 5, 2000

The PRIDE (*PRIDE Youth Programs*) Survey queries students about their use of eight types of illegal drugs—marijuana, cocaine, uppers, downers, inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin and steroids—plus alcohol and tobacco.

- For the school year ending in June, 2000, the PRIDE Survey found that 23.6 percent of students in grades 6-12 tried an illicit drug at least once, compared to 27.1 percent during the 1998-99 school year—a 12.9 percent decrease in annual use. This is the strongest one-year decline in overall drug use since 1990-1991.
- For all drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, students reported no statistically significant increases in use as measured on both annual and monthly bases. Students in grades 6 to 8, mostly ages 11-14, showed the most vigorous reductions in use, while the least movement was seen at the 12th grade level.
- One in four (25.4 percent) 12th grade students used illegal drugs on a monthly basis and 8.6 percent reported daily drug use. In addition, one in four of the Class of 2000 reported that they drank alcohol weekly (24.5 percent) and smoked cigarettes daily (23.1 percent).
- When asked when they use drugs and alcohol—before school, during school, after school, weeknights, and weekends—during school was the least mentioned choice. A quarter of students (25.5 percent) drank alcohol at home. One in ten (10.1 percent) said they used drugs at home. For older students, the home is an even more common place to use drugs and drink. Among 12th graders, 40.2 percent say they drink at home, and 17.1 percent use drugs there. Students were twice as likely to use alcohol and drugs on weekends as during weeknights or after school.
- Although much attention is given to “latch key” kids who misbehave after school while parents are at work, there was no significant distinction between use after school and on weeknights.

National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, SAMHSA August 2000

This report, a project of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) since 1971, provides national estimates of rates of use, number of users, and other measures related to use of illicit drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and other forms of tobacco by the population ages 12 years and older. For the first time, the report provides estimates of illicit drug, alcohol, and cigarette use by age group that can be compared across States and the District of Columbia. The sample size was expanded almost fourfold from previous years and data are now based on information obtained from nearly 70,000 persons in a new computer-based questionnaire.

- An estimated 14.8 million Americans were current users of illicit drugs, having used drugs 30 days prior to the interview—up from last year’s estimated 13.6 million users, but not statistically significant. The 14.8 million figure represents 6.7 percent of the population 12 years old and older. The number was 25 million at its highest point in 1979.
- There were no significant changes in the rate of past month illicit drug use in any of the age groups 12-17 years, 18-25 years, 26-34 years, 35 years and older between 1998 and 1999. However, the rate of use was lower in 1999 than in 1997 for the age group 12-17 years, and there appears to be a consistent downward trend (11.4 percent in 1997, 9.9 percent in 1998, 10.9 percent in 1999). Among young adults age 18 to 25 years, the rate increased between 1997 and 1999 (14.7 percent in 1997, 16.1 percent in 1998, and 18.8 percent in 1999). The rates for the two oldest age groups have not changed significantly since 1994.
- Among youths age 12-17, 10.9 percent reported past month use of illicit drugs in 1999. Marijuana is the major illicit drug used by this group; 7.7 percent of youths were current users of marijuana in 1999.
- The rates of current illicit drug use for major racial/ethnic groups were 6.6 percent for whites, 6.8 percent for Hispanics, and 7.7 percent for African-Americans. The rate was highest among the American Indian/Alaska

Native population (10.6 percent) and among persons reporting multiple race (11.2 percent). Asian-Americans had the lowest rate at 3.2 percent.

- The rate of illicit drug use in metropolitan areas was higher than that rate in non-metropolitan areas. Rates were 7.1 percent in large metropolitan areas, 7.0 percent in small metropolitan areas, and 5.2 percent in non-metropolitan areas. Rural non-metropolitan counties had a lower rate of illicit drug use (4.2 percent) than other counties.
- Trends for marijuana uses were similar to the trends for any illicit use. There were no significant changes between 1998 and 1999 for any of the four age groups, but an increasing trend since 1997 among young adults age 18-25 years (12.8 percent in 1997, 13.8 percent in 1998, and 16.4 percent in 1999) and a decreasing trend since 1997 for youths age 12-17 years (9.4 percent in 1997, 8.3 percent in 1998, and 7.0 percent in 1999).
- *[Because information on when people first used a substance is collected on a retrospective basis, information on first time use or incidence is always one year behind information on current use.]* An estimated 2.3 million persons first used marijuana in 1998. More than two thirds of these new users were under age 18. The rates of marijuana initiation for youth during 1995 through 1998 are at their highest levels since the peak levels in the late 1970's. However, the 1998 rate for youth was significantly lower than the 1997 rate.
- Estimates of heroin incidence are subject to wide variability and usually do not show any clear trend. A large portion of the recent heroin initiates are young and are smoking, sniffing, or snorting heroin. Approximately 25 percent of persons who used heroin for the first time were under age 18 and another 47 percent were age 18-25 at the time of first use. Only 37 percent reported having ever injected heroin by 1999. Most (89 percent) were living in metropolitan areas.

1999 Partnership Attitude Tracking Survey (Parent Component), PDF/A April 2000

- More than half (57%) of all parents now say they spoke with their children about drugs at least four times in the past year.
- Parents are more likely to say they've covered drugs "thoroughly" (64% agreed in 1999, up from 52% in 1998).
- 73% of parents spoke about how drugs can "mess up their child's mind", up significantly from 61% in 1998.
- 68% of parents spoke about how drugs can "adversely affect a child's education," up significantly from 58% in 1998
- 74% of parents spoke about how drugs can "adversely affect a child's life."

These talks appear to be having an impact. According to the Partnership's teen survey which was released in November 1999, teen attitudes about drugs are now changing for the better, and teen drug use is leveling off and/or declining after increasing steadily from 1992 to 1997.

Despite their more active role, research suggests the scope of the drug problem is exacting a price on parents' confidence in their own ability to safeguard children from drugs:

- 75% of parents now think "most people will try marijuana sometimes", up significantly from 65% in 1995.
- 33% of parents now see marijuana as "very easy" for their children to get.
- 32% of parents believe "what I say will have little influence on whether my child tries marijuana"

- 30% of parents believe there's "nothing I can really do to help the drug problem."

At rates similar to those of the past, parents continue to underestimate their children's exposure to illegal drugs:

- 51% of parents say that their teen has friends who use marijuana, but 68% of teens say they have friends who use marijuana.
- 44% of parents of teens say that marijuana is very easy for their teen to get, but 54% of teens say that the drug is very easy to get.
- 37% of parents of teens say that their teen has been offered drugs, but 54% of teens say they have been offered drugs.
- 18% of parents say that their teen has tried marijuana, but 41% of teens say they have tried the drug.

1999 Partnership Attitude Tracking Survey (Teens in grades 7-12), PDFa November 1999

Attitude Findings

- Today, 40 percent of teens strongly agree that "really cool" teens don't use drugs, compared to 35 percent who did just last year. Among younger teens (13- to 15-year olds) only 8 percent believe marijuana users are popular, down from 13 and 17 percent in 1998 and 1997, respectively.
- Significantly fewer teens agree that many rock and rap stars make drug use look tempting (42 percent in 1999, down from 48 percent in 1998 and 51 percent in 1997).
- Fewer teens also believe that music makes marijuana seem cool, 29 percent in 1999 compared to 33 percent in 1998 and 37 percent in 1997.
- Fewer teens believe television and movies glamorize drug use (37 percent in 1999, compared to 43 percent in 1998 and 44 percent in 1997).
- Teens belief that "most people will try marijuana sometimes" has declined to 35 percent, from 40 percent in 1998 and 41 percent in 1997.
- Fewer teens hear about legalizing marijuana, down to 28 percent this year, from 32 and 43 percent over the previous two years.
- The number of teens agreeing with the statement, "It seems like marijuana is everywhere these days," declined to 48 percent this year, down from 52 percent and 59 percent in 1998 and 1997.
- Teens are also finding that it's not difficult to turn away from drugs; just 11 percent of teens today believe it's difficult to reject a friend's invitation to try marijuana, down from 14 percent last year.
- The percentage of teens saying they tried to talk a friend out of using drugs increased to 41 percent in 1999, up from 38 percent in 1998.

Drug Use

- **Marijuana** use, (trial use) which increased more than any other drug in the 1990's, declined to 41 percent in 1999; 42 percent in 1998; and down from 44 percent in 1997.
- Past year use declined to 33 percent; 34 percent in 1998; down from 36 percent in 1997.
- Past month use declined to 21 percent, from 23 percent in 1998 and 24 percent in 1997.
- Trial use of **inhalants** dropped to 19 percent this year, down from 22 and 23 percent in 1998 and 1997.
- Past year use of inhalants declined to 11 percent, down from 14 and 15 percent during the previous two years.
- Past month use of inhalants declined to 6 percent, down from 8 percent in 1998 and 1997.
- Trial use of **methamphetamine**—a drug most popular in the west and southwest regions of the country—was 10 percent this year, down from 12 percent in 1998 and 1997.
- Meth use in the past year also dropped to 7 percent this year, down from 9 percent in 1998 and 1997.
- Past month meth use dropped to just 3 percent of teenagers, down from 5 percent in 1998 and 1997.
- Trial use of **LSD** dropped to 10 percent; down from 12 percent in the previous two years. Trial use of **Ecstasy** remained steady at 7 percent. Experimentation with **heroin** remained stable at 3 percent of teens who tried the drug in 1999, as compared to 4 percent over the past two years.
- For the first time since 1993, the use of **cocaine** and **crack** has shown a downturn. Past year use of cocaine declined to 6 percent in 1999, from 8 percent in 1998 and 7 percent in 1997. Past month use of cocaine declined to 3 percent this year; down from 5 and 4 percent in 1998 and 1997. Past year use of crack dropped to 4 percent this year after being at 5 percent in 1998. And past month use of crack dropped to just 2 percent, down from 3 percent over the previous two years.